

Minutes of the **MONTHLY MEETING** of the Swanage Town Council held via Zoom on **MONDAY, 14th DECEMBER 2020** at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M.P. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor C. Finch
Councillor T. Foster
Councillor A. Harris
Councillor D. Monkhouse
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor G.M. Suttle
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor M. Whitwam

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, eight members of the public, and two members of the local press attended the Meeting.

Major Katrina Greetham, The Salvation Army, Swanage offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

Before opening the Meeting, the Chairman welcomed members of the public and read a short statement regarding filming/audio recording etc. of the Meeting, and a summary of the procedure for Public Participation Time.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised:-

- **Mowlem Institute Theatre Trust** – presentations were given by a number of Trustees which included an overview of the history of the theatre, details of improvements made to date, and business expansion proposals for the future. The vision of the Trustees was to create a lively cultural centre at the heart of the Swanage community. The impacts of the current Covid-19 pandemic were discussed, and it was noted that the theatre remained closed at the present time. However, the Trustees aimed to reopen as soon as it was safe to do so. Support for the Trust's proposals was sought from the Town Council, and an invitation was extended for a representative from the Council to sit on the theatre's Management Committee. It was noted that the Trust would also be contacting Artsreach and the Arts Council, and would be exploring funding opportunities.
- **Peveril Point Shelter** – concerns were raised regarding the condition of the shelter, and its possible demolition. Requests were made for the Town Council to urgently explore all avenues to preserve this wartime structure and undertake public consultation. Comments were also made that only six such structures remained intact and that the shelter should be preserved to protect the heritage of Peveril Point. Details were given about a similar structure in Brixham which had been protected and was open to the public for educational and historical purposes. Suggestions were made that the Town Council should consider working in partnership with an appropriate body regarding a possible preservation/mapping project.
- **Census 2021** – the Census Engagement Manager for Dorset introduced himself to the Meeting and provided an overview of Census 2021, which would be taking place on 21st March 2021. A request was also made for the Town Council to assist with publicity of the Census.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.25 p.m.

72. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Rogers and Trite.

(a) **To consider request from Councillor Page for leave of absence for a period of six months**

Consideration was given to an email received from Councillor Page dated 11th December 2020 requesting a leave of absence for six months due to ill health. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Suttle and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council authorises the request from Councillor Page for a leave of absence for a period of six months with effect from 14th December 2020.

It was noted that Councillor Page's apologies would be reported to all meetings during this period, although he remained able to attend if he felt able to do so.

73. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 - 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Agenda Item No. 7 - Councillor Harris declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a personal acquaintance of one of the Mowlem Trustees.

74. **MINUTES**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 19th October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

(b) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 7th December 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

75. **PLANNING AND CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee held on 5th October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

76. **PLANNING AND CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee held on 2nd November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

77. **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 3rd November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.
78. **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**
Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 3rd November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.
79. **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**
Proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 11th November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.
80. **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 17th November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.
- Consideration was given to the following recommendation contained in the Minutes:-
- 5) **Update from the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 11th November 2020**
It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That consideration be given to the installation of bollards at the top of the parish slipway to prevent vehicular access on safety grounds, and that legal advice be sought accordingly.
81. **ROADS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**
Proposed by Councillor Whitwam, seconded by Councillor Moreton, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Roads and Transport Committee held on 25th November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.
82. **STATEMENT OF CASH BALANCE**
(a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st October 2020 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
(b) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 30th November 2020 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

83. **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations, the following Payment Schedules were submitted for information:-

- Payment Schedule 7, amounting to £310,024.70
- Payment Schedule 8, amounting to £717,454.17

84. **MOWLEM THEATRE TRUST – MATTERS ARISING FROM PRESENTATION DURING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME**

Further to the presentations given by the Trustees of the Mowlem Institute Trust during Public Participation Time, consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Trust which summarised its vision for the future. Thanks were given to the Trustees for the informative presentations, and for the opportunity for the Town Council to be involved with the Theatre's future development.

Members were in support of the Trust's vision for the theatre to become a cultural centre, and felt that it was an exciting community project which would also provide opportunities for employment, and act as a 'springboard' for the town's young people. By providing an important mix of education and entertainment to the local community it would complement the Council's health and wellbeing agenda.

Members welcomed the opportunity for a representative of the Council to attend the Trust's Management Committee Meetings. However, it was felt that as the project was still in its early stages this should be on an 'observer only' basis at the present time.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Mayor, Councillor Bonfield, be appointed to attend meetings of the Mowlem Institute Trust's Management Committee as an observer, until the next Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

85. **CENSUS 21ST MARCH 2021 – TO NOTE CONTENT OF PRESENTATION**

Further to the presentation given during Public Participation Time a discussion was held regarding the upcoming Census which was taking place on 21st March 2021. It had been noted during the presentation that households across the county would be receiving letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March 2021, and it was anticipated that the vast majority of people would complete the form online. The Census Engagement Manager welcomed assistance from the Town Council to publicise the Census, and provide help to residents regarding completion of the form if they were unable to do so online. It was further noted that temporary Census 2021 jobs would also be available over the coming months for any interested party to help make the Census a success.

A copy of the 'Census 2021 Councillor handbook' had been provided to Town Councillors which provided practical advice on how the Council could engage with the local community and help spread the word in the lead up to the Census going live.

Members were in support of helping to promote this important event, including via its website and Facebook page, and the Census Engagement Manager would provide the Council with details of resources and useful information/links available for this purpose.

86. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Bonfield reported that in his capacity of Town Mayor he had attended the following events during the past month:-

- **Remembrance Sunday Service - 8th November 2020** - a scaled back/short service at the War Memorial, along with Councillor Harris. The service had been videoed/live-streamed.
- **Remembrance Day Service – 11th November 2020** – a scaled-back service and act of remembrance at the War Memorial, along with Councillor Harris. The service had been videoed/live-streamed.

Councillor Bonfield was also pleased to report that the refurbishment of the Mayoral Chain had now been completed and that it looked superb.

87. **REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS**

Updates were given on the following matters:-

- **Budget setting** – it was reported that Dorset Council was in the process of budget setting for the financial year 2021/22.
- **Wellbeing project** – an update was given on the ongoing discussions between Dorset Council and the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust regarding the future use of the buildings adjoining The Centre on Chapel Lane. A further update on the progress of this project was anticipated early in the New Year.

88. **STEERING GROUP UPDATES**

(a) **Swanage Community Housing Steering Group held on 4th November 2020 and update following public meeting held on 18th November 2020**

It was reported that preparations for the public meeting held on 18th November 2020 had been finalised at the meeting of the Group held on 4th November. The aim of the public meeting had been to enable members of the public to find out more about the Swanage Community Housing Project, and to enlist local people to play a part in delivering genuinely affordable housing in Swanage. Steering Group Members were pleased to report that the meeting had been a success. Eighteen members of the public had been in attendance, a number of whom had expressed an interest in becoming involved in the project. A review meeting would be held by the Group to discuss next steps.

89. **WORKING PARTY UPDATES**

(a) **Market on 5th November 2020**

Further to Minute No. 243 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 20th March 2020 it was reported that the one-year trial had been a success and that it was proposed that the Town Council would continue to run the market in-house for a further year. It was noted that the market would continue to focus on crafts, produce, and goods that were not readily available in Swanage. Proposals for reduced market stall fees and discounts for some users, for the summer period 2021, had been discussed and would be considered further at the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee Meeting being held on 16th December 2020.

(b) **Environmental Policy on 9th and 26th November 2020 - Recommendation to adopt environment policy action plan**

Further to Minute No. 54 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2020 the Visitor Services Manager was pleased to present the draft Swanage Town Council Environment Policy Action Plan to the meeting. The Plan's actions had been categorised under each of the six adopted policy areas (which had been approved by the Council in February 2020), and would form the basis of further engagement with residents and stakeholders.

It was reported that the Council had taken the approach of producing a short action plan, with a small number of key actions, which would could be developed quickly. It was noted that progress had already been made with some of these actions. It was acknowledged that this would be an ever-changing plan, which would grow and develop as a better understanding was gained as to what would be required to meet the challenges of the climate crisis.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council adopts the draft Swanage
Town Council Environment Policy Action Plan dated
9th December 2020.

Thanks and appreciation were given to the Environmental Working Party Members for all their hard work in developing the Action Plan, and for such a clear and concise document.

(c) Emergency Health Services working party on 12th November 2020

Further to Minute Nos. 55 (d) and 63 (a) & (b) of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2020 it was reported that members of the working party had attended the Meeting of the People and Health Scrutiny Committee (PHSC) held on 2nd November 2020 and had made representations to the Committee regarding the proposed withdrawal of the Swanage Paramedic Car service, and had requested support for an ‘A & E’ Local at Poole Hospital. A letter reiterating the Town Council’s concerns regarding local residents’ access to emergency health care had also been presented to the PHSC.

It was further reported that the Chief Executive of SWAST had written to confirm that the Swanage Paramedic Car service was not going to be removed at the end of December 2020, and that public engagement regarding the future of the service would be undertaken by Dorset CCG in early 2021.

(d) Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing held on 20th November and 2nd December 2020

Further to Minute No. 54 (a) i) & ii) of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2020, updates were provided as follows:-

Meeting held on 20th November

• **Day’s Park**

The working party had met with representatives from Swanage and Herston Football Club to consider a condition survey of the existing buildings at Day’s Park, which would be discussed further under Minute No. 94 below. The need for a meeting with the Football Club and Development Trust to discuss next steps in the redevelopment project had also been discussed, and an initial meeting had been held at Day’s Park on 27th November with members of the Football Club Committee to set the scene for those discussions.

• **Beach Gardens**

The results of a survey of the Pavilion had been received and the working party would be working with the Tennis and Bowls Clubs in the New Year to plan for the future. Further details had also been received regarding the Tennis Club’s proposals for the installation of AstroTurf on Court 3.

• **King George’s Field**

Initial consideration had been given to commercial proposals for electric bike hire and a food hut. Further discussions regarding the bike hire would be held, and proposals may be put before the Town Council in the New Year, although this would possibly not be located at King George’s. It had been agreed that it would not be appropriate to take forward food options at the present time.

Meeting held at King George's Field on 2nd December

- **#Willdoes**

The location for the proposed community support bus had been agreed, and the draft budgets for the electrical upgrades required would be considered further at the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee Meeting being held on 16th December. A formal proposal regarding the project would be considered at the Council Meeting being held on 25th January 2021.

- **King George's Field area**

A walkabout had identified a range of issues for the group to consider further including playground upgrade, use of Forres Field, the pathway around the perimeter, enhancements to the wetland area, wildlife information boards, sensory planting and engagement with local schools.

(e) **Events – proposals for 2021**

Further to Minute No. 59 of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Visitor Services Manager (VSM) which set out details of a request which had been received from a national market company to run a food market on Prince Albert Gardens (PAG) from 14th to 16th May 2021. The event would include hot food, live music, a craft beer bar, and children's entertainment. It was reported that the company was an experienced event provider and would be looking to establish this community focussed event on an annual basis.

It had been recommended by the working party that provisional approval be considered by the Town Council to enable the company to start the planning process for the event if it was to go ahead. A request was also made for this event to be staged at either PAG or Sandpit Field. This approval would also be dependent on government advice and the Town Council's view nearer the time. Each element of the request was discussed in turn, as set out in the briefing note:-

1. **Consider if provisional approval should be provided for this event in May 2021**

During the discussion, comments were made in favour of the event, and that it should be held as a trial for 2021. However, concerns were raised regarding waste/litter generation, the possible use of generators, and that if the event did go ahead it should adhere to the Council's Environment Policy. Further comments were made that consideration should be given to increasing electrical capacity in Town Council owned parks and fields in the future.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Foster and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council provides provisional approval for a food market to be held on Prince Albert Gardens (subject to point 2. below) between 14th and 16th May 2021, subject to adherence to government guidance for public events and the Town Council's requirement to demonstrate compliance therewith, including submission of the required documentation at the appropriate time.

2. **Consider whether the event organiser may use either Prince Albert Gardens or Sandpit Field**

In light of the layout of Prince Albert Gardens, it was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Foster and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That delegated authority be granted to the Visitor Services Manager, in consultation with Events Working Party, to liaise with the event organiser regarding the most suitable site for the event.

3. **Delegated authority to be provided to the Visitor Services Manager to agree a suitable fee with the event organiser**

It was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That delegated authority be granted to the Visitor Services Manager, in consultation with Events Working Party, to agree a suitable fee with the event organiser.

90. **PEVERIL POINT SHELTER – OUTLINE OPTIONS FOR REPAIR OR DEMOLITION**

Further to the comments and concerns raised during Public Participation Time, consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Operations Manager dated December 2020 which set out outline options for the repair or demolition of the Peveril Point shelter.

It was reported that in late August 2020 the Operations Team had been alerted that large pieces of concrete debris had fallen from the ceilings and edges of the structure. Upon inspection it was apparent that in several areas the metal reinforcements had corroded and had caused large areas of plaster and concrete to fall away from the structure. There was also evidence of degradation on both the upper and lower tiers of the structure. Barriers and warning signs had therefore been put in place.

An inspection of the structure and tunnels was undertaken in September 2020 by both a surveyor and an expert in the field of concrete construction which had identified that the cause of the corrosion was not just due to external factors such as salty air, wind and rain, but was also intrinsic to the structure itself.

In view of the poor condition of the structure a request was made for consideration to be given to:-

- The installation of additional security measures at an estimated cost of £5,000.
- Options for the longer-term future of the structure in order to provide guidance to the Capital Projects Sub-Committee where the matter would be considered further.
- Whether public consultation should be undertaken in respect of the options as set out in the briefing note.

During the ensuing discussion Members were in agreement that further information, including the outcome of a public consultation, would be required before a decision on this matter could be made. It was also agreed that, in the interests of health and safety, more substantial safety measures should be installed around the site as a matter of urgency.

It was proposed by Councillor Suttle, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves a budget of up to £5,000 for the installation of additional security measures at the Peveril Point shelter site, and undertakes public consultation in respect of future options.

91. **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- (a) **Swanage2027 Steering Committee** – further to Minute No. 61 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2020 it was reported that the Steering Committee had recently met and had reviewed the progress of priority projects.

It was noted that the Wellbeing Swanage project was in the process of being taken forward, and that there was an openness to discussions with Dorset Council around the future of asset management and service delivery in Swanage.

- (b) **Sustainable Swanage** – further to Minute No. 20 of the Annual Meeting held 14th September 2020 it was reported that a row of 20 oak trees had now been planted by Dorset Council in the High Street, the slow-growing saplings would not reach maturity for approximately 50 years, and would create a wonderful ‘avenue’. The group was continuing with its fundraising efforts to pay for a further 20 trees to be planted in due course. Monthly open meetings were continuing to be held by the group on a variety of topics, and it was noted that the meeting in January 2021 would be about the Town Council’s Environment Policy and Action Plan. The Town Mayor and Visitor Services Manager would be in attendance to present the documents and answer any questions that attendees had regarding these.
- (c) **Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils** – it was reported that the Town Mayor and Councillor Harris had represented the Council at a well-attended AGM on 14th November 2020. An update was given on proceedings, including the determination of the motions raised. It was noted that annual membership fees would be increasing by 3% in 2021.

92. **REPORTING OF DELEGATED MATTERS**

There were no delegated matters to report at the present time.

93. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

- (a) **Meeting with MP, 11th December 2020 – Update** – Members of the Town Council and the Town Clerk had met online with Richard Drax, MP on 11th December to discuss matters of concern to local residents, which had included the Paramedic Car service, A&E Local, and local maternity services. It was reported that it had been a worthwhile meeting, the MP had taken on board the concerns raised, and would be raising these with the relevant organisations on behalf of the Council accordingly. An update on current issues affecting the UK government had also been given by Mr Drax.
- (b) **Removal of Ambulance Car from Swanage – Update** – an update had been provided under Minute No. 89 (c) above.
- (c) **A & E Local – Update** - further to Minute Nos. 27 (b) and (c) of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2020, and Minute No. 89 (c) above, it was reported that this matter had not been on the agenda of the Meeting of the PHSC held on 2nd November 2020. A further update would be given at a future Council Meeting.
- (d) **Wellbeing Swanage – Update** – it was reported that the group was in the process of exploring funding opportunities to cover the cost of a temporary Wellbeing Coordinator to drive forward the Wellbeing Swanage project.
- (e) **Arrangements for Swanage Town Carol Service, 20th December 2020** – a reminder was given regarding the Town Carol Service being held at 6.30 p.m. on 20th December. It was reported that the service would be videoed/live-streamed to enable members of the community to watch proceedings from their own homes.

- (f) **Sandbanks Ferry application for toll increase – Update** – further to Minute No. 66 of the Council Meeting held on 19th October 2020, it was reported that the Public Inquiry had been adjourned until 5th January 2021. The Town Council wished to extend its thanks to Dorset and BCP Councils for their support on this issue.

The Town Mayor then thanked the members of public and local press present for attending meetings of the Town Council, and for their interest in its work.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: -

That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda items 17 and 18 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

94. **SWANAGE AND HERSTON FOOTBALL CLUB – SURVEY OF FACILITIES AT DAY’S PARK**

Further to Minute No. 89 (d) above, it was reported that the recently commissioned condition survey regarding the Football Club buildings at Days Park had led the Council and the Club to conclude that the Sports Hall could not reopen for public use after the pandemic. Representatives of both organisations had agreed that demolition of the Hall in order to facilitate future redevelopment proposals was likely to be the best option.

It was noted that representatives of the Football Club and Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust would be meeting to discuss next steps, and that the Council would also seek to meet with both parties early in the New Year. It was anticipated that, subject to appropriate certification, the Club House could remain in use and that the Football Club would continue to operate from Days Park.

95. **RENTS AND LICENCES PANEL – CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTE NO. 11 OF THE POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3RD NOVEMBER 2020**

Further to Minute No. 71 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 7th December 2020, the Town Clerk provided an update in respect of rent arrears in relation to commercial property. It was noted that formal recovery action could not be taken at the current time due to central government’s moratorium on forfeiture due to the pandemic. It was noted that further to Minute No. 11 of the Meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 3rd November 2020, the Town Clerk had delegated authority to act in the matter.

Prior to closing the meeting, the Town Mayor wished to record his thanks on behalf of the Town Council to all of its officers and staff members for their hard work and dedication during the past twelve months, which had been an extraordinary and difficult year at times. A special mention was made of Ms Gail Percival, Operations Manager, who had joined the Council only a few weeks prior to the first lockdown.

The Town Mayor also gave thanks to all Town Councillors for their support, assistance and understanding during what had been unprecedented times.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 p.m.